

BROMLEY LABOUR GROUP NEWS

NEWSLETTER OF THE LABOUR MEMBERS OF BROMLEY COUNCIL

**CRAY VALLEY WEST WARD
SUE GIBBENS, JOHN HOLBROOK & COLIN WILLETTS**

**PENGE & CATOR WARD
PETER FOOKES, JOHN GETGOOD & KAREN ROBERTS**

MAY / JUNE 2005 EDITION

TORY COUNCILLOR LEAVES THE PARTY

Rod Reed, Tory Councillor for Kelsey and Eden Park ward has quit his local party and stood against local MP Jacqui Lait as an Independent in the General Election in Beckenham. Reed has always been a bit of a maverick and has regularly opposed the Tory line on issues. He polled a paltry 800 votes although interestingly in percentage terms, her share of the vote remained exactly the same as at the 2001 contest. She was one of the very few Tory candidates not to gain votes. Reed has been ostracised by his former Tory colleagues and in a show of petty vindictiveness, they have refused to allow him to sit on any committees or give him any positions of authority. He was instrumental in the deselection of his ward colleague, Chris Phillips and Copers Cope Councillor Tony Wilkinson. Reed attempted to deny them their current responsibilities on the council at the recent AGM but received no support from his former colleagues. Phillips remains the Portfolio Holder for Social Care, Health and Housing and Wilkinson continues to chair the Development Control committee. The splits in the party get bigger with the deselection of Bickley ward member and former Mayor; Ingrid Buckley. The Tories are certainly paying the price for having too many members at the moment! Hopefully we can address that problem as the London borough elections take place next May!

CARR GIVEN LICENSE FOR ANOTHER YEAR

Stephen Carr managed to survive the Tory group AGM and remains as leader for another year. The Bromley Common and Keston Councillor gained the "poisoned chalice" after his predecessors Michael Tickner and Russell Mellor were dispensed with last year. In a mixed year, he has seen the council improve from being classified as "weak" to "good" but there remain many problems and most residents will be asking themselves why Bromley are not being given "excellent" ratings by the Audit Commission. The failure to invest in Social Services and Housing and vacancy rates of over 20% continue to plaque the authority. The performance of the Environmental Services Department also gives rise to concerns where the portfolio holder George Taylor is more concerned about staying within budget and promoting the interests of car drivers at the expense of road safety rather than providing a service to the residents of Bromley. There is also a major resistance to change which needs to be addressed with many Tories not adapting to the pace of modern life. They reluctantly join in with the Association of London Government which promotes the interests of all councils across the capital but refuse to attend the national Local Government Association (LGA) which lobbies government on behalf of all local authorities.

STREET CLEANING AND BIN EMPTYING FORGOTTEN

The Tories and in particular, Environment Portfolio holder George Taylor have come under much criticism for the performance of the new contractors; Caxton Keir. There have been many complaints across the borough about the lack of street cleaning and street bin emptying which has encouraged vermin, particularly in the recent spell of good weather. Cleaning in Penge High Street is at best variable. Please let us know if there are problems in your area which need to be taken up. Once again Bromley residents have been let down by this Tory Council.

EXTRA GOVERNMENT FUNDS FOR BROMLEY SCHOOLS

Schools in Bromley are celebrating after qualifying for a cash grant totalling nearly two hundred thousand pounds. The government grant will go to 37 schools who have produced a travel plan to reduced congestion and make travel to and from school easier and safer. Studies show that pedestrians are exposed to less pollution than car occupants whilst travelling along the same stretch of road. Research by the Environmental Transport Association shows that car drivers and passengers can be exposed to up to three times as much pollution as pedestrians. Individual primary schools are entitled to £3750 plus £5 per pupil and the figures at secondary level are £5000 plus the extra £5 per pupil.

NEW SURE START CENTRE OPENS IN PENGE THANKS TO £1MILLION FROM THE LABOUR GOVERNMENT

The new Sure start Centre in Woodbine Grove in Penge is now open. Community Vision is unique in Bromley – the first of its kind to bring direct support and early intervention services for families with children under five years old. Building work commenced in January 2004 and over 1,000 Penge and district families are registered on the scheme which aims to counter disadvantage. This is part of the national Sure Start Labour government initiative to tackle poverty and other issues through early intervention. It delivers integrated services with Bromley Primary Care Trust and other community organisations. Sure Start Penge offers 74 different kinds of childcare, health and social care services, including a shop in the High Street and is supported by 23 members of staff. The programme has funding for ten years with the aim of existing services being integrated into the mainstream after the funding period ends. Additional services have included counselling, yoga, swimming, family advocacy, support for ethnic minority and refugee groups, courses, support groups, events, activities and day trips. When did the Tories ever do anything like this?

RAVENSBOURNE COLLEGE HOUSING SCHEME DEFERRED

Proposals for 250 new housing units on the Ravensbourne College site in Chislehurst were deferred at a recent meeting of the Development Control Committee in order to seek a reduction in the numbers involved.

THANKS FROM OUR PARLIAMENTARY CANDIDATES

Our parliamentary candidates would like to thank you for your support during the General Election. We were a clear second in both Beckenham with Liam Curran gaining over 13,000 votes, Rachel Reeves got more than 10,000 to keep second place for us in Bromley and Chislehurst. Emily Bird also fought hard in Orpington where the Tories comfortably held on to the seat. We would like to wish Liam well as he has apparently broken his ankle in three places following a fall at his home.

CONTACTING BROMLEY LABOUR GROUP/SCHOOL GOVERNORS

We are always happy to take up issues that you raise with us. One of the best ways of doing that is on e mail or through the council website – www.Bromley.gov.uk You can contact councillors by using the same format eg, Peter.Fookes@Bromley.gov.uk This is the same for members and officers of the authority as well. You can also use the old snail mail and write to us c/o Bromley Civic Centre, Stockwell Close, Bromley BR1 3UH. We also need to have more school governors. If you are interested, please contact one of us or Janet Heathcote at Bromley.